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MATTERS RELATING TO RULES OF PROCEDURE, DOCUMENTATION AND THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON DOCUMENTATION

I. PURPOSE

1. The present report of the working group on documentation is submitted to the Executive Board in accordance with decision 96/6 of 19 January 1996. The attention of the Board is drawn particularly to paragraph 7, which contains the recommendations of the working group.

II. BACKGROUND

2. The working group on documentation was formed in pursuance of Executive Board decision 96/6 of 19 January 1996. At its meeting of 28 February 1996, the Bureau of the Executive Board ratified the membership of the working group as follows:

Country	Linguistic group
Morocco	Arabic
China	Chinese
Trinidad and Tobago	English
France	French
Spain	Spanish
Ukraine	Russian

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3. In addition, representatives of the Executive Board secretariats of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and of the United Nations Office of Conference and Support Services (UNOCSS) were assigned to serve on the working group.

4. Members of the working group participated in an on-site visit to UNOCSS, including the reproduction and distribution services, and received an introductory briefing from UNOCSS. The group held six meetings between 5 March and 16 July.

5. The principal task of the working group was to recommend ways in which documentation might be made available on a more timely basis to the Executive Board. During the course of its work, the group concluded that the quality and length of reports play a key role in their processing and final availability.

6. At its annual session 1996, the Executive Board considered the interim report of the working group (DP/1996/CRP.11); the comments of the Board are contained in the report on the annual session (DP/1996/19, paras. 26, 31 and 33). Those comments have been taken into consideration in the final recommendations of the working group intended to improve further the quality of documentation submitted to the Board and to ensure its timely availability.

III. EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

7. The Executive Board may wish to:

1. Decide to establish page limits for documents to be submitted to the Executive Board, as contained in the annex to the present decision;

2. Request the Administrator to enforce, where appropriate, the page limits set out in the annex to the present decision;

3. Decide that:

(a) Reports over five pages long (excluding country programming documents) shall have an executive summary;

(b) Statistical annexes and tables shall, to the extent possible, be presented in addenda to the main document;

4. Also decide to refuse to consider a report that exceeds the number of pages set out in the annex to the present decision;

5. Request the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to ensure that documents are submitted to the United Nations Office of Conference and Support Services 10 weeks before the start of a session, with the aim of complying with the six-week rule established by the General Assembly and most recently reaffirmed in its resolution 50/206; and to maintain close coordination with the United Nations Office of Conference and Support Services in all matters

pertaining to the submission and issuance of documentation, including the electronic distribution of documentation submitted to the Executive Board;

6. Decide that in cases where a report has not been issued in all languages six weeks before the start of a session, the secretariat shall make available advance copies of the report at that time, including through electronic means where possible, in the language of submission; and that such documentation be distributed to observers who have indicated their interest in receiving advance copies of documentation at the same time as it is distributed to members of the Executive Board;

7. Call upon all members of the Executive Board to exercise restraint in requesting reports and policy papers and to consider the possibility of greater use of oral reports.

Annex

PAGE LIMITS FOR REPORTS SUBMITTED TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

UNDP

1. Policy papers shall not exceed 15 pages;

2. Country cooperation frameworks shall follow a common format and shall not exceed the range of 6-10 pages;

3. Reports concerning budgetary and financial matters shall not be subject to the 15-page limit but shall none the less be as concise as possible, with due regard to the need to present statistical annexes and data in addenda to the main document in line with paragraph 3 of the present decision.

UNFPA

1. Policy papers shall not exceed 15 pages;

2. New country programmes shall not exceed the range of 7-9 pages;

3. Requests for extensions and/or additional resources for country programmes shall not exceed the range of 3-5 pages;

4. Reports concerning budgetary and financial matters shall not be subject to the 15-page limit but shall none the less be as concise as possible, with due regard to the need to present statistical annexes and data in addenda to the main document in line with paragraph 3 of the present decision.